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UNCLAS DUBLIN 001057

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: IRISH RESPOND POSITIVELY TO REQUEST FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN DARFUR

REF: STATE 153857

1. Summary. Irish officials Don Sexton and Pat Kelly responded positively to the request for European support for deployment of an African Union (AU) protection force. Both stressed Ireland's interest in African affairs, especially regarding humanitarian aid. Ireland has given nearly three million euros in assistance for basic needs in Darfur and plans to lend more financial assistance upon the Minister of State for Development Tom Kitt's return from Darfur. End Summary.

2. Emboff, drawing on reftel points, spoke on July 15 with Don Sexton, First Secretary in the Development Cooperation Division at the DFA. Sexton stated that Ireland already supports the AU Mission in Sudan and that EU funding for the mission was fast-tracked during the Irish Presidency. Ireland also provides one of the EU observers in Darfur. Sexton informed emboff that Minister of State for Development Tom Kitt is in Darfur and is planning additional GOI contributions based upon his findings in the region. Sexton, while not being able to provide an exact amount, stated he was confident the new funding would exceed the previous 2.9 million euro donation. Sexton continued to stress that Ireland's main goal for the next 12-18 months is to meet Darfur's humanitarian needs, such as food and health care.

3. In regards to the GOI's willingness to play a direct role in organizing and deploying an international protection force, Sexton stated that Ireland is willing to listen to all suggestions and initiatives but generally follows a UN mandate. Sexton could not supply specifics in terms of what types of support could be expected from the GOI in the future.

4. Following the meeting with Sexton, emboff spoke with Pat Kelly, Deputy Director of African Affairs at the DFA. Kelly reiterated the points made by Sexton in the earlier meeting, stressing Ireland's interest in Sudan and the GOI's willingness to assist the AU. Kelly stated that their primary efforts will continue to go towards the AU mission, but they are willing to examine further initiatives. Kelly also stressed that the GOI will continue to work within the UN.

KENNY